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GENEVA CONFERENCE BULLETIN - II

ROK delegate comments on Nam Il proposal: At a meeting of deputies of the sixteen nations on 28 April, South Korean Ambassador Yang labeled the North Korean proposal as "totally unacceptable" and pointed out its similarity to the Communist proposal of 19 June 1950, as well as Molotov's proposal on Germany at Berlin. Yang said that Nam's proposal envisaged a coalition government which would be unworkable, advanced a troop withdrawal plan which was vague and unrelated to the unification process, called for simultaneous Chinese and UN withdrawals which South Korea could not accept, and failed to provide for UN supervision.

Rhee's election tactics may undermine South Korean position at Geneva: UN observers and foreign press representatives in South Korea are increasingly concerned over President Rhee's coercive tactics against his opponents in the campaign for the 20 May elections. Ambassador Briggs believes that publicity prejudicial to the South Korean and American positions at Geneva can be expected. He warns that continued revelations of police intimidation would undermine South Korea's contention that any future elections in connection with Korean unification should be held under its auspices.

The first prominent "casualty" among assemblymen seeking re-election is Cho Pong-am, vice chairman of the National Assembly and Rhee's chief opponent in the 1952 presidential elections, who was prevented from filing his application prior to the deadline date. The Democratic Nationalist Party, the largest anti-Rhee group in South Korea, has threatened to withdraw from the campaign because of police intervention.

These tactics of abuse and police intimidation are a part of Rhee's determination to replace the present generally hostile assembly and to secure the passage of several constitutional amendments, one of which would give him a lifetime term.

Possible Soviet tactics at Geneva: A Soviet diplomat in London again told American diplomats on 27 April that little could be expected from the conference on Korea and that there appeared to be growing interest in partition of Indochina,

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"a solution which seemed feasible." The Soviet delegation, he said, would remain in the background with the result that the Chinese Communists would have to bear the brunt of Secretary Dulles' "verbal H-bombs." He predicted that the conference would be relatively short, "forty days at the most."

Soviet diplomats are known to have suggested on three previous occasions that an Indochina settlement might be based on partition. A Soviet spokesman on 15 April raised the possibility of a cease-fire with each side keeping the areas it now holds.

It is not yet clear what role Molotov will elect to play at Geneva. He may feel that a less prominent role will facilitate efforts to maneuver the conference into acting as a "mediator" between France and the Viet Minh.

Molotov and Chou En-lai will almost certainly remain in Geneva for some time after the departure of the Western Big Three foreign ministers in order to demonstrate their genuine efforts to make Geneva a success.

Izvestia has already observed that statements by American officials that they will stay only as long as necessary "are creating a clearly negative attitude in wide public circles."

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France under increasing pressure to negotiate with Ho:
There is increasing pessimism in Paris over the possibility of a cabinet crisis if Dien Bien Phu falls. Premier Laniel's successor, it is estimated, would be pledged to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh and to withdraw French forces from Indochina, and would be unwilling to accept any form of German rearmament. While the Geneva conference increases Laniel's chances of remaining in office, the fall of Dien Bien Phu and the refusal by Britain and the United States of direct military support in Indochina will encourage France to take drastic steps toward a negotiated settlement. Any plausible Communist offer would then bring all-out French pressure for American acquiescence.

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